NOMINATION OF KINNAIRD R. McKEE TO BE ADMIRAL AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC AND THEATER NUCLEAR FORCES

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF

KINNAIRD R. McKEE TO BE ADMIRAL AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

FEBRUARY 23, 1982

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NOMINATION OF VICE ADM. KINNAIRD R. McKEE TO BE ADMIRAL AND DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION, DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1982

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC AND
THEATER NUCLEAR FORCES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, at 8:30 a.m., in room 212, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. John W. Warner (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Warner, Stennis, Jackson, Cannon, Nunn.

Staff present: Frank J. Gaffney, Patrick L. Renehan, James C. Smith, professional staff members: Christine E. Cowart, chief clerk; Mark B. Robinson, research assistant; Karen A. Love, staff assistant.

Also present: Dennis P. Sharon, assistant to Senator Goldwater; Buzz Hefti, assistant to Senator Warner; Frank Krebs, assistant to Senator Cannon.

OPENING STATEMENT BY SENATOR JOHN W. WARNER, CHAIRMAN

Senator WARNER. The hearing will come to order.

The purpose of our opening session is to hear the nomination of Vice Adm. Kinnaird R. McKee to be promoted to the grade of full admiral. The chairman has asked our Subcommittee on Strategic and Theater Nuclear Forces to receive testimony from the nominee and to make recommendations to the full committee on his credentials.

It is somewhat unusual for our committee to take testimony on a promotion from three to four stars. But the position to which Admiral McKee has been assigned is indeed unique in our Government.

It is the position formerly held by Admiral Rickover. The position has great responsibilities both within the Department of Navy and the Department of Energy. The naval nuclear program is one of the utmost important programs in our entire national security system. Replacing Admiral Rickover is a monumental undertaking, as you well know.

Admiral McKee, we are pleased to have you with us and the presence of your wife.

Admiral MCKEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator WARNER. Senator Stennis?

Senator STENNIS. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted with this appointment. I have been concerned about it, frankly, since I have known that Admiral Rickover was not going to continue on in his former capacity.

As we all know, no program is more far reaching, more meaningful, and more determining for our future, I think, than this one.

So, congratulations to you, Admiral. You have been put in a big place, but you are a big man—you have proven that by your record. You are the pride of all of us. I saw the former Commandant of the Marine Corps over the weekend, Lewis Wilson, a fine man.

Admiral MCKEE. Yes, sir.

Senator STENNIS. He is in retirement now, as you know. He sent you his regards.

Admiral MCKEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator STENNIS. He is concerned about the office. I look forward to your service. I will not be a meddler, but I will be one greatly interested in you in your capacity.

I have detained you long enough.

Senator WARNER. Mr. Chairman, we thank you for coming this morning. Admiral McKee, I will insert in the record your nomination reference and biographical sketch.

[The nomination reference and biographical sketch follow:]

NOMINATION REFERENCE

IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,
February 3, 1982.

Ordered, that the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

The following named officer, having been designated for command and other duties of great importance and responsibility in the grade of admiral within the contemplation of Title 10, United States Code, Section 601, for appointment while so serving as follows:

To be admiral

Vice Adm. Kinnaird R. McKee, U.S. Navy.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF NAVAL SERVICE FOR VICE ADM. KINNAIRD ROWE MCKEE, U.S. NAVY

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, August 14, 1929.
Midshipman, U.S. Naval Academy, July 7, 1947.
Ensign, June 1, 1951.
Lieutenant (junior grade), January 1, 1953.
Lieutenant, October 1, 1955.
Lieutenant Commander, September 1, 1960.
Commander, August 1, 1965.
Captain, July 1, 1970.
Rear Admiral, July 1, 1973.
Designated Vice Admiral while serving in billets commensurate with that grade.
Service continuous to date, March 15, 1978.
Years of active service: Over 30.
Assignments and duties (last 10 years): Office of CNO (Exec. Director, CNO Executive Panel), August 1970 to July 1973; Commander, Submarine Group EIGHT/ADDU: Commander, Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine Force CTF64/ Commander Submarine Force Sixth Fleet CTF69, July 1973 to July 1975; Superintendent, Naval Academy, July 1975 to September 1978; Commander, Third Fleet, September 1978 to October 1979; Office of CNO (Director, Naval Warfare), October 1979 to date.

Medals and awards: Legion of Merit with two Gold Stars in lieu of subsequent awards; Navy Unit Commendation awarded USS *Skipjack* (SS(N)585); Navy Unit Commendation awarded USS *Dace* (SS(N)607) with bronze star in lieu of second award; China Service Medal; Navy Occupation Service Medal with "Europe" Clasp; National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star in lieu of second award; Korean Service Medal; Korean Presidential Unit Citation; United Nations Service Medal.

Military and civilian schools/special qualifications: BS (Naval Science) U.S. Naval Academy, 1951; Graduate of Naval Submarine School, New London, 1953; Qualified in Nuclear Propulsion Plants; Language Qualification: Spanish (Knowledge).

Senator WARNER. I have known the nominee for too many years to add up now, beginning, I believe, around 1969 when I first went to the Department of the Navy as Under Secretary. I have had the privilege of working with him in a number of capacities.

Admiral, do you have any comments you wish to make this morning? I have several questions.

STATEMENT OF VICE ADM. KINNAIRD R. McKEE, DIRECTOR, NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION PROGRAM

Admiral McKEE. I have a very brief statement, with your indulgence, sir.

Senator WARNER. Yes, sir. Do you have any other individuals beside your wife whom you would like to introduce as being present this morning?

Admiral McKEE. Well, yes, Mr. Foster, my financial man; and Mr. Schmitt, who is also on my staff.

On February 1 of this year I relieved Admiral Rickover as Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion program. In assuming this position I have been afforded both an opportunity and a challenge.

The opportunity is to contribute to the combat effectiveness of over 40 percent of the Navy's combatant forces. The challenge is to maintain the high standard of professional competence and technical integrity that has been the hallmark of this program since it began, and I would like to elaborate on that.

My reference to professional competence emphasizes the importance of selecting and training, and qualification of all the people who operate, maintain, and supervise our naval nuclear propulsion plants. My own personal experience in submarines over 18 years coupled with my experience as Superintendent of the Naval Academy, has convinced me that the principles and practices on which the training and qualification system is based are both valid and necessary.

My reference to technical integrity applies to every facet of the program, from initial design through powerplant production and test, to operation and maintenance of commissioned ships. The necessary technical and operational standards in each of these areas are clearly defined, but the measure of those standards lies not only in their definition but in execution. That is a very basic principle and one to which I am firmly committed.

But, going one step further, commitment alone is inadequate—accountability is the key. That is an overworked word, you have heard it over and over again. It is an extremely important concept

in the Navy. The best definition I have seen came from a 1952 article in the Wall Street Journal after the destroyer U.S.S. *Hobson* went down with 167 of the crew in the Aranalo.

Some people called in, and wrote letters to the editor complaining because the Navy was pursuing its normal, vigorous investigation of the event. The subject of the investigation was the commanding officer of the ship who was dead, having gone down with his ship.

The readers felt the Navy was being "cruel,"—that was the word. After all this was a good and well-intentioned man, he had done his best. He died with his ship. Why pursue it?

The article responded, and one paragraph is pertinent. It said:

> It is cruel, this accountability of good and well-intentioned men. But the choice is that or an end to responsibility and finally, as the cruel sea has taught us, an end to trust and confidence in men who lead. For other men will not trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do.

During Admiral Rickover's tour in this job there was never any doubt in anyone's mind who was accountable for the safe and effective operation of our naval nuclear propulsion plants. There should be no question today.

I will provide my statement for the record.

That is all I have, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WARNER. Thank you very much, Admiral. I am going to ask committee counsel to incorporate in the hearing record your statement and your letter on the naval nuclear program.

[The information follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF VICE ADM. KINNAIRD R. MCKEE, DIRECTOR, NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION PROGRAM

On 1 February of this year I relieved Admiral H. G. Rickover as Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. I have attached to this statement a copy of my relieving memorandum and of the Presidential Order which has defined my duties and responsibilities.

In assuming this position, I have been afforded both a singular opportunity and a serious challenge. The opportunity resides in a special responsibility for the combat effectiveness of over 40 percent of the Navy's first line warships. The challenge is to maintain the high standard of professional competence and technical integrity that has been the hallmark of the program since its inception over 30 years ago. Each of these two characteristics is critically important. Let me explain.

My reference to professional competence is intended to emphasize the importance of careful selection, training, and qualification of people charged with the responsibility for safe operation, supervision, and maintenance of our nuclear propulsion plants. My fleet experience has clearly validated the principles and practices which govern the way we operate. This validation is further strengthened by my experience as Superintendent of the Naval Academy, where I was responsible for the professional education of many officers who serve so effectively today.

My reference to technical integrity applies to every facet of the program, from initial design, through power plant production and test, to operation and maintenance of commissioned ships. Technical and operational standards in each of these areas are clearly defined, but the measure of those standards lies not only in the definition, but also in the business of execution. I am fully committed to that principle, but commitment is of no value without accountability.

Accountability is an overworked word, widely recognized, but not well understood. The best definition came from a newspaper editorial following the loss of USS *Hobson* with 176 of her crew in a collision in the East China Sea in 1952. The editorial had responded to a reader's concern over the Navy investigation—described as cruel because the writer felt that the Captain had already suffered enough in going down with his ship. The editorial responded:

"It is cruel, this accountability of good and well intentioned men. But the choice is that, or an end to responsibility, and finally, as the cruel sea has taught us, an end to trust and confidence in men who lead. For other men will not trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do."

During Admiral Rickover's tour in this job, there was never any question as to who was accountable for the safe and effective operation of naval reactor plants. There should be no question today.

Having said that, you should undertand that I fully recognize the difficulty of the task and that I do not intend to become only a caretaker of Admiral Rickover's program. There is still much to do, yet the job has already been done so well for so long that many have come to think it is not difficult at all. In fact, the program's impeccable safety record often raises questions among the less well informed regarding the necessity for vigorous adherence to high, and often expensive, standards.

I have been in the job for three weeks now. I have found that the tools I need are in place. Critically important organizational relationships and responsibilities have been preserved, with direct access to the boss in each department. I also have inherited the best technical staff in the business. They are fully committed to this program and to its principles. Most important, they have the technical competence to satisfy that commitment.

That is all well and good, but the final, and perhaps most important element in the equation, is the continuing confidence and firm support of Congress. In the years to come, I shall endeavor to deserve both.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY,
Washington, D.C., February 1, 1982.

Memorandum to: Distribution.
Subject: The Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Effective this day I have relieved Admiral H. G. Rickover as the Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. I have done so in full awareness of the importance of Admiral Rickover's contribution. Admiral Rickover is unquestionably one of the greatest and most innovative engineers in our nation's history. Nothing can change that; the task at hand is to continue the stewardship he so faithfully carried out.

With this transition, there has been speculation as to the future organization and operation of this joint Department of Defense/Department of Energy Program. Any such speculation has been laid to rest by the President in a memorandum dated December 27, 1981, to the Secretaries of Defense and Energy. In that memorandum he stated:

"The Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program has achieved a reputation recognized worldwide for excellence in all phases of its work. It has been carried out as a joint program of your departments so that all aspects of naval nuclear propulsion are maintained under the close control of one organization.

I want to ensure that the basic structure, policies, and practices which have been developed over the years for naval nuclear propulsion matters continue to govern this program. There should be no misunderstanding as to the Administration's commitment to assure that this program continues to function as effectively as in the past."

Over the years Admiral Rickover has often cited key principles that have contributed to the unblemished safety record of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. His congressional testimony after the Three Mile Island accident is a recent example in which he cited such key factors as conservative design, careful selection and thorough training and qualification of personnel, verbatim compliance with procedures, and frequent extensive inspections at all levels. It took complete commitment to all of these principles to achieve the safety record of this program.

I want to convey to each of you in the strongest manner possible that these principles continue to govern. You need not question this or ask for further clarification. Every requirement, report, procedure and practice remains in effect. Regular reports which you have been making to Admiral Rickover should continue to be made to me.

The Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program provides a major element of our Navy with unmatched military capability and supports the most invulnerable element of our strategic deterrent. The ability of U.S. nuclear powered warships to operate

effectively throughout the world in support of the Nation's defense interests makes our work of the most compelling priority. Nuclear power is a sophisticated and complex technology; it provides significant military benefits, but it demands that we continue the same uncompromising commitment to hard work, personal integrity and technical excellence that has been the hallmark of this Program since its inception. I expect that each of you, and each of your people, will continue this commitment.

KINNAIRD R. MCKEE,
Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

Senator WARNER. Admiral, I think both you and I share the highest regard for Admiral Rickover, especially during the period when he was working with Members of Congress so that a very orderly transition could take place as he elected to step down from his office.

He had the opportunity to express very high regard for you personally and professionally.

Admiral MCKEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator WARNER. Members of the Congress, of course, have a reciprocal respect for this great American which has been clearly stated here in the past few weeks in connection with his retirement.

I personally worked with Admiral Rickover for nearly a decade and consider him one of the most influential persons ever to work with me, both professionally and personally.

Now, turning to some questions. I wonder what views you might have at this time on the proposed reorganization of the Department of Energy, and in particular what would be your recommendation with respect to the Office of Naval Reactors under any reorganization of the Department of Energy?

Admiral MCKEE. As you know, sir, the Naval Reactors organization has moved as an element of the original AEC organization through several steps, from AEC to ERDA, to the Department of Energy.

In the early stages of the game, Admiral Rickover made what has proved to be a very wise decision, and that was to put Naval Reactors in the section of the Atomic Energy Commission that dealt with energy research because of their compatible technology rather than weapons development. This arrangement provided an opportunity for mutual exchange and a better framework in which to do the sort of engineering that he needed to do. The advantages of this arrangement persist today.

There are two things about the reorganization that I would express. One is, I think it is important for us to remain on the side of the house that is responsible for nuclear research.

The other, of course, is your business, not mine. But I think we should retain adequate oversight from the same people that have given it to us in Congress all along. That has been a critical element of what we do. We would not like to lose that.

Senator WARNER. The chairman wishes to recognize Senator Cannon, who has just joined us. Senator, this is a nomination hearing, as you know, for Admiral McKee to full admiral of the U.S. Navy as the successor to Admiral Rickover.

Senator CANNON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry I was not here to hear the admiral's statement. I will pass on the questions.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Senator.

Admiral, do you have a position as to the appropriateness of this proposal as it affects your operation? I think you may have covered that in your statement.

Admiral McKee. I think I did, sir. I guess the bottom line, Senator, is that the proposal, as I understand it right now, keeps us in the operational and organizational perspective we have enjoyed for the last several years. If that is retained, we should be all right.

Senator Warner. Admiral, as you know, in the closing days of the last session of the 97th Congress, Senator Jackson and I introduced in legislative form the reorganization of Admiral Rickover's office.

Senator Jackson, I am just about to address a question to the admiral relating to the legislation that you and I jointly introduced in the closing hours of the 97th Congress. Admiral, I want to get your views as to whether or not the Executive order which was issued on February 1, 1982, was sufficient for the purposes of your charter, and whether you would care to express any views as to whether it and any other points should be included in forthcoming legislation.

Admiral McKee. Sir, as you know, the Executive order is signed. We have gone very carefully over the Executive order and there is very little question that it has adequately addressed all the issues that were of concern to the Naval Reactors organization

So, in terms of having an immediate tool to do the job, I believe we have that. On the other hand, I would not want to tell you that legislation is improper. There is no question that legislation has, more permanence, as I am going to be in this job for a long time in the long term it would be more useful.

At the present time I would not envision that there would be any difference between what is contained in the Executive order and what should be in legislation.

Senator Warner. You would feel free to come before the members of this committee and express the desire, if it is your desire at a later time, to augment the charter that you presently have?

Admiral McKee. I shall do so, sir.

Senator Warner. Senator Jackson?

Senator Jackson. Mr. Chairman, I have nothing to add on that except to say, essentially the Executive order codifies at the executive level, I believe, the basic structure that has been followed in the past.

Admiral McKee. Yes, sir.

Senator Jackson. In order to strengthen Admiral McKee's hand and to provide the continuity because we are talking about a term of office here, I do feel that the statutory enactment of it is very important because Executive orders can be changed from day to day.

Admiral McKee. Yes, sir.

Senator Jackson. You have an enormous charter here, of responsibility. I believe we would be better advised to provide the continuity by statute. That is where I come down personally, and I gather the chairman does too.

Senator Warner. Yes; I share those views and I suggest that perhaps the two of us get together and propose legislation.

In the meantime, the Chair will insert in the record the President's transmittal letter of December 27, 1981, to the Secretary of Defense, and the Executive order dated February 1, 1982.

[The transmittal letter and Executive order follow:]

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, D.C., December 27, 1981.

Memorandum for:

Hon. Caspar W. Weinberger, The Secretary of Defense.
Hon. James B. Edwards, The Secretary of Energy.

Subject: Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

With the retirement of Admiral Rickover as Director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, it is important that measures be taken to assure the continuity of this program and its present functions. The Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program has achieved a reputation recognized worldwide for excellence in all phases of its work. It has been carried out as a joint program of your departments so that all aspects of naval nuclear propulsion are maintained under the close control of one organization.

I want to ensure that the basic structure, policies, and practices which have been developed over the years for naval nuclear propulsion matters continue to govern this program. There should be no misunderstanding as to the Administration's commitment to assure that this program continues to function as effectively as in the past.

RONALD REAGAN.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, D.C., February 1, 1982.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12344

NAVAL NUCLEAR PROPULSION PROGRAM

By the authority vested in me as President and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States of America, with recognition of the crucial importance to national security of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, and for the purpose of preserving the basic structure, policies, and practices developed for this Program in the past and assuring that the Program will continue to function with excellence, it is hereby ordered as follows:

SECTION 1. The Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program is an integrated program carried out by two organizational units, one in the Department of Energy and the other in the Department of the Navy.

SEC. 2. Both organizational units shall be headed by the same individual so that the activities of each may continue in practice under common management. This individual shall direct the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program in both departments. The director shall be qualified by reason of technical background and experience in naval nuclear propulsion. The director may be either a civilian or an officer of the United States Navy, active or retired.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Navy (through the Secretary of Defense) and the Secretary of Energy shall obtain the approval of the President to appoint the director of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program for their respective Departments. The director shall be appointed to serve a term of eight years, except that the Secretary of Energy and the Secretary of the Navy may, with mutual concurrence, terminate or extend the term of the respective appointments.

SEC. 4. An officer of the United States Navy appointed as director shall be nominated for the grade of Admiral. A civilian serving as director shall be compensated at a rate to be specified at the time of appointment.

SEC. 5. Within the Department of Energy, the Secretary of Energy shall assign to the director the responsibility of performing the functions of the Division of Naval Reactors transferred to the Department of Energy by Section 309(a) of the Department of Energy Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7158), including assigned civilian power reactor programs, and any naval nuclear propulsion functions of the Department of Energy, including:

(a) direct supervision over the Bettis and Knolls Atomic Power Laboratories, the Expended Core Facility and naval reactor prototype plants;

(b) research, development, design, acquisition, specification, construction, inspection, installation, certification, testing, overhaul, refueling, operating practices and procedures, maintenance, supply support, and ultimate disposition, of naval nuclear propulsion plants, including components thereof, and any special maintenance and service facilities related thereto;

(c) the safety of reactors and associated naval nuclear propulsion plants, and control of radiation and radioactivity associated with naval nuclear propulsion activities, including prescribing and enforcing standards and regulations for these areas as they affect the environment and the safety and health of workers, operators, and the general public;

(d) training, including training conducted at the naval prototype reactors of the Department of Energy, and assistance and concurrence in the selection, training, qualification, and assignment of personnel reporting to the director and of personnel who supervise, operate, or maintain naval nuclear propulsion plants; and

(e) administration of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, including oversight of program support in areas such as security, nuclear safeguards and transportation, public information, procurement, logistics, and fiscal management.

SEC. 6. Within the Department of Energy, the director shall report to the Secretary of Energy, through the Assistant Secretary assigned nuclear energy functions and shall serve as a Deputy Assistant Secretary. The director shall have direct access to the Secretary of Energy and other senior officials in the Department of Energy concerning naval nuclear propulsion matters, and to all other personnel who supervise, operate or maintain naval nuclear propulsion plants and support facilities for the Department of Energy.

SEC. 7. Within the Department of the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy shall assign to the director responsibility to supervise all technical aspects of the Navy's nuclear propulsion work, including:

(a) research, development, design, procurement, specification, construction, inspection, installation, certification, testing, overhaul, refueling, operating practices and procedures, maintenance, supply support, and ultimate disposition, of naval nuclear propulsion plants, including components thereof, and any special maintenance and service facilities related thereto; and

(b) training programs, including Nuclear Power Schools of the Navy, and assistance and concurrence in the selection, training, qualification, and assignment of personnel reporting to the director and of Government personnel who supervise, operate, or maintain naval nuclear propulsion plants.

SEC. 8. Within the Department of the Navy, the Secretary of the Navy shall assign to the director responsibility within the Navy for:

(a) the safety of reactors and associated naval nuclear propulsion plants, and control of radiation and radioactivity associated with naval nuclear propulsion activities, including prescribing and enforcing standards and regulations for these areas as they affect the environment and the safety and health of workers, operators, and the general public.

(b) administration of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program, including oversight of program support in areas such as security, nuclear safeguards and transportation, public information, procurement, logistics, and fiscal management.

SEC. 9. In addition to any other organizational assignments within the Department of the Navy, the director shall report directly to the Chief of Naval Operations. The director shall have direct access to the Secretary of the Navy and other senior officials in the Department of the Navy concerning naval nuclear propulsion matters, and to all other Government personnel who supervise, operate, or maintain naval nuclear propulsion plants and support facilities.

SEC. 10. This Order is effective on February 1, 1982.

RONALD REAGAN.

Senator WARNER. Last week, Admiral, I had an extensive inspection trip to the laboratories at Sandia and Los Alamos. One thing that impressed me was research being done on small nuclear reactors, especially in support of the satellite power program.

I would hope that you would keep an open mind on the subject of small reactors, and that you would feel free to come forward at the appropriate time and advise the committee as to whether or not you think small reactors may be utilized in naval vessels.

Do you have any comments at this time?

Admiral MCKEE. Yes, sir. I think one of the persistent pieces of mythology around town about the naval reactors program has been that it has not been very innovative and that it tends to be overly conservative. This is one of the things I spent some time with the first few days, to find out exactly what is going on.

One of the things I find is that the organization and Admiral Rickover have spent a great deal of time exploring alternate concepts. We will continue to do that, Senator. We will not close our minds to anything.

But I think the point that I would make is that we need to start with the question of, "What do you want the submarine or the warship to do," rather than, "How big do you want the plant to be?" Otherwise we end up with a warship that is not what it should be. I believe if we start with the basic requirements that the submarine or surface ship has to satisfy, and then develop the plant that goes with that, the issue will take care of itself, sir.

Senator WARNER. Well, as you know, the cost of naval vessels, and particularly those nuclear powered, is growing. I think we have smaller reactors in the hope it would reduce some of the costs.

Gentlemen of the committee, are there further questions?

Senator STENNIS. Mr. Chairman, let me add one point. A young college newspaperman came along the other day down in my home State of Mississippi, and he wanted to know what I thought was the most important question pending here in Washington in the Government.

I said, "Right off I think it is what we do about nuclear energy. How are we going to use it, to what extent, industrially and also as weaponry and every other phase?" I think that is the big thing.

I think it is a mistake to not continue the Department of Energy in some form. I do not often go to the President of the United States, but I did put in a word to him along that line. I do not say this critically, because he is trying hard. But somewhere the emphasis has got to be put back on the track, I think.

I doubt that Congress would repeal this act—we passed it—if it was put to us directly. I say that because you are a "big wheel" now in that whole problem, question, direction, of what are we going to do.

So, as just one member of the committee I want you to know, that is how it looks to me after watching the last 30 years here, of development. I would believe this committee would be with you.

Again, I certainly wish you well.

Admiral MCKEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator WARNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Senator Jackson?

Senator JACKSON. Mr. Chairman, I would just make an observation, if I may.

Admiral McKee, of course I have known him for many, many years going way back to the early days of the nuclear program, and he comes ideally equipped.

May I say that the standards laid down by Admiral Rickover through the years have been a key part of the revival of our Navy.

In another respect, the safety program, if you please, or the demanding requirements, Mr. Chairman, laid down by Admiral Rickover, resulted in a unique record that not even the Soviets with their enormous participation in the nuclear submarine program have been able to come close to equaling.

I think we have 154 naval reactors operating now?

Admiral MCKEE. Yes, sir, on ships; that is correct.

Senator JACKSON. And, "knock on wood," Mr. Chairman, there has not been an incident. When you look at the civilian program, there is always something scaring the public.

The Navy has enormous diplomatic problems on their hands with Navy nuclear-powered ships going into various ports around the world and any one little episode could tear apart an alliance or have an enormous impact, obviously, on American foreign policy.

So, Admiral McKee comes well equipped and he has a tremendous responsibility. I think we need to give him all the power that is needed to maintain those high standards that have done so well.

Senator Cannon and I were just talking here a moment ago, Admiral, and I was saying that from a cost-effective standpoint we now have nuclear cores, I believe, that have a life cycle of something as high as what, 17 years?

Admiral McKee. We are at 13 to 15, sir, and it looks like some of these cores may go farther than that. Of course as you know, we are in the process now of developing cores that will last the entire life of a ship.

Senator Jackson. So, you amortize the ship and the fuel all at the same time, in effect.

Admiral McKee. Not only that, but you avoid maintenance costs reduce the disposal problems and a host of other things.

Senator Jackson. And there is another little factor in this. With the advent of nuclear power, Mr. Chairman, a barrel of oil was down around $2 and $3, and it hit as high as $40. So, if you look at the costs, the cost saving is enormous compared to the non-nuclear Navy and having to be dependent on the current price of oil, whatever that might be?

In that area alone the savings have been enormous, and of course operating costs can exceed the capital costs over the life of a vessel.

Senator Warner. Senator Jackson, you raise a very important point. I think the record should reflect in greater detail the safety record achieved by the U.S. Navy since the inception of the nuclear program.

As my distinguished colleague mentioned, there are 154 reactors presently in operation in the fleet, both surface and subsurface vessels.

Admiral McKee. That is correct, sir.

Senator Warner. And Senator Jackson said without incident. Of course, what he meant is, there has been no loss of life. Why not expand on that record here?

Admiral McKee. Yes, sir. These reactors have been operating continuously for about 30 years since the *Nautilus* prototype first went into operation. There has been no accident in any of these. There has been no injury due to radiation; no loss of life. There has been no significant release of radioactivity during that period of time that would affect the environment.

So, all in all, it is a remarkable record of effective operation. I think I would expand a little further with your permission. The question came up 2 or 3 years ago when principal concerns about the commercial industry arose and Admiral Rickover was asked how he has been able to maintain such a record.

His response, and mine today, would be high standards and supervision; the sorts of things I had talked about earlier, professional competence and technical integrity which is a critical element in this whole thing—technical integrity.

But overriding all of that is the fact that we have a remarkable group of men and women involved in this program who know what they are doing. The reason we do is because it has been a very tightly screened, carefully selected group of people trained to exacting standards, personally selected by Admiral Rickover.

In my judgment, sir, this is the single most important element of the safety record you referred to.

Senator WARNER. Is it your intention to continue that practice?

Admiral McKEE. Absolutely.

Senator WARNER. And personally interview the principals that will be involved in this program?

Admiral McKEE. Yes, sir. That is my intention and I am already doing that.

Senator WARNER. We are joined here by our distinguished colleague from Georgia. Senator Nunn, this is a nomination hearing for Admiral McKee. Would you care to make a statement or ask any questions?

Senator NUNN. No, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Senator WARNER. In the past we have asked for and have received in full the frank views of Admiral Rickover. This has been of essential value to the Congress in carrying out our responsibilities.

Admiral McKee, can we count on you to give us your full and frank views—and indeed your personal views—with respect to your responsibilities in the Department of Navy and the Department of Energy?

Admiral McKEE. Yes, sir, unequivocally.

Senator WARNER. Are there any further comments or questions from members of the subcommittee?

Senator JACKSON. Mr. Chairman, I move the nomination be favorably reported.

Senator CANNON. I second the move.

Senator WARNER. The nomination has been moved and seconded. All in favor say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Senator WARNER. Opposed?

[No response.]

Senator WARNER. The Clerk will inform the absent members of the subcommittee and have it polled by 5 p.m. today so that we can expedite this nomination.

We thank you, Admiral, and we welcome the presence of your wife today.

Admiral McKEE. Thank you, sir.

Senator WARNER. Good luck.

Admiral McKEE. Thank you.

Senator WARNER. We will take a few minutes recess and then resume the subcommittee hearing on strategic matters.

[Whereupon, at 8:56 a.m. the subcommittee proceeded to other business.]

[The nomination of Vice Adm. Kinnaird R. McKee was reported to the Senate by Senator John Warner on February 25, 1982, with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed. The nomination was confirmed by the Senate on March 2, 1982.]

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